

Application No.: 10/017,416
Reply dated May 17, 2004
Reply to Final Office Action dated November 18, 2004

Docket No.: 8733.535.00

REMARKS

At the outset, Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough review and consideration of the subject application. The Advisory Action dated March 25, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the claim amendment under 37 CFR § 1.116. Specifically, in the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 2, 4, 19, 20, and 22 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, and solely for purposes of expediting prosecution of the present application, Applicants hereby amend claims 1 and 16 to recite the subject matter of claims 2 and 19, respectively, and submit that claims 1 and 16 (and their various dependent claims) are in condition for immediate allowance.

If the Examiner deems that a telephone conversation would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 496-7500.

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If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 17, 2004

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